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Tax Evaders Aided By CIA

The latest revelation of Central Intelligence Agency interference with other government agencies raises the not altogether whimsical question of whether the CIA exists for the benefit of government or whether government exists for the benefit of the CIA. *The Wall Street Journal* reported the other day that a major tax evasion investigation was suspended by the chief of the Internal Revenue Service; and later a tax evasion prosecution, involving nearly 500 cases and perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars, was called off by the Justice Department. Both operations, aimed at the same targets, apparently were ended because of objections by the CIA.

Although the reason given for the cutoff of the tax cases was that a federal judge had ruled that part of the evidence was obtained in an illegal search, the fact was that the government also had in its possession the same evidence, legally obtained. The real problem for the government seems to have been that the evidence involved the

Bahamas-based Castle Bank, which was used by the CIA as a conduit for millions of dollars to finance clandestine operations against Cuba and other countries in Latin America and against countries in the Far East.

The dropping of what the *Journal* called "the biggest tax evasion case of all time" makes one wonder how far the American people are going to be asked to let their government's operations be subverted in the name of "national security" by an agency that is scarcely ever publicly accountable. The basic issue is not the CIA's ability to gather intelligence (which almost everyone agrees is important) but its continued freedom to carry out dirty tricks against other countries — a mode of operation that not only undermines the integrity of other U.S. agencies but that also poisons U.S. relations with other nations and that institutionalizes corrupt methods to achieve foreign policy objectives that might be better accomplished by legitimate means.